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“Imperialism” AND “The Tracks of Our Forefathers”

A PAPER READ BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

Before the Lexington, Massachusetts, Historical Society

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1898

In a word, many wise men thought it a time when those two miserable adjuncts which Nerva was dñfied for uniting (*per se et inter se*), were as well reconciled as is possible. — *Clarendon History of the Rebellion, Vol. I.*

“I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers where I can neither wade nor step while — Burke’s Speech on *Consolation with America*”

BOSTON
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1899

“IMPERIALISM”

AND

“THE TRACKS OF OUR FOREFATHERS.”

WHAT the feast of the Passover was to the children of Israel, that the days between the nineteenth of December and the fourth of January—the Yuletide—are and will remain to the people of New England. The Passover began “in the first month on the fourteenth day of the month at even,” and it lasted one week, “until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.” It was the period of the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, and the feast of unleavened bread; and of it as a commemoration it is written, “When your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.” And thus, by their yearly Passover, were the Jewish congregations of old put in mind what farewell they took of the land of Egypt.

So our own earliest records tell us that it was on the morning of Saturday, of what is now the nineteenth of December, that the little exploring party from the *Mayflower*, then lying at her anchor in Provincetown Harbor, after a day and night of much trouble and danger, sorely buffeted by wind and wave in rough New England’s December seas, found themselves on an island in Plymouth Bay. It was a mild, “faire sunshining day. And this being the last day of the weeke, they prepared ther to keepe the Sabath. On Munday they sounded the harbor, and marched into the land, and found a place fitt for situation. So they returned to their shipp againe [at Provincetown] with this news. On the twenty-fifth of December they weyed anchor to goe to

the place they had discovered, and came within two leagues of it, but were faine to bear up againe; but the twenty-sixth day, the winde came faire, and they arrived safe in this harbor. And after wards tooke better view of the place, and resolved wher to pitch their dwelling; and the fourth day [of January] begane to erecte the first house for commone use to receive them and their goods." Such, in the quaint language of Bradford, is the calendar of New England's Passover; and, beginning on the nineteenth of December, it ends on the fourth of January, covering as nearly as may be the Christmas holyday period.

Is there any better use to which the Passover anniversary can be put than to retrospection? "And when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." So the old story is told again, being thus kept ever green in memory; and, in telling it, the experiences of the past are brought insensibly to bear on the conditions of the present. Thus, once a year, like the Israelites of old, we, as a people, may take our bearings and verify our course, as we plunge on out of the infinite past into the unknowable future. It is a useful practice; and we are here this first evening of our Passover period to observe it.

This, too, is an Historical Society,—that of Lexington, "a name," as, when arraigned before the tribunal of the French Terror, Danton said of his own, "tolerably known in the Revolution;" and I am invited to address you because I am President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the most venerable organization of the sort in America, perhaps in the world. Thus, to-night, though we shall necessarily have to touch on topics of the day, and topics exciting the liveliest interest and most active discussion, we will in so doing look at them,—not as politicians or as partisans, nor from the commercial or religious side, but solely from the historical point of view. We shall judge of the present in its relations to the past. And, unquestionably, there is great satisfaction to be derived from so doing; the mere effort seems at once to take us into another atmosphere,—an atmosphere as foreign to unctuous cant as it is to what is vulgarly known as

"electioneering taffy." This evening we pass away from the noisy and heated turmoil of partisan politics, with its appeals to prejudice, passion, and material interest, into the cool of a quiet academic discussion. It is like going out of some turbulent caucus, or exciting ward-room debate, and finding oneself suddenly confronted by the cold, clear light of the December moon, shining amid the silence of innumerable stars.

Addressing ourselves, therefore, to the subject in hand, the question at once suggests itself, — What year in recent times has been in a large way more noteworthy and impressive, when looked at from the purely historical point of view, than this year of which we are now observing the close? The first Passover of the Israelites ended a drama of more than four centuries' duration, for "the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years; and at the end of the four hundred and thirty years all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." So the Passover we now celebrate commemorates the closing of another world drama of almost precisely the same length, and one of deepest significance, as well as unsurpassed historic interest. These world dramas are lengthy affairs; for, while we men are always in a hurry, the Almighty never is: on the contrary, as the Psalmist observed, so now, "a thousand years in his sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." The drama I have referred to as this week brought to its close, is that known in history as Spanish Domination in America. It began, as we all know, on the twenty-first of October, 1492; it has been continuous through six years over four centuries. It now passes into history; the verdict may be made up.

So far as I personally am concerned, — a matter needless to say of very trifling consequence, — this verdict was rendered a year ago. It was somewhat Rhadamanthine; but a twelve-month of further reflection has shown no cause in any respect to revise it. In referring to what was then plainly impending, in December, 1897, before the blowing up of the battleship *Maine*, before a conflict had become inevitable, I used this language in a paper read to the Massachusetts His-

torical Society: "When looking at the vicissitudes of human development, we are apt to assume a certain air of optimism, and take advancement as the law of being, as a thing of course, indisputable. We are charitable, too; and to deny to any given race or people some degree of use in the economy of Nature, or the plan of Creation, is usually regarded as indicative of narrowness of view. The fatal, final word "pessimist" is apt to be whispered in connection with the name of one who ventures to suggest a doubt of this phase of the doctrine known as Universalism. And yet, at this time when, before our eyes, it is breathing its last, I want some one to point out a single good thing in law, or science, or art, or literature, — material, moral or intellectual, — which has resulted to the race of man upon earth from Spanish domination in America. I have tried to think of one in vain. It certainly has not yielded an immortality, an idea, or a discovery; it has, in fact, been one long record of reaction and retrogression, than which few pages in the record of mankind have been more discouraging or less fruitful of good. What is now taking place in Cuba is historical. It is the dying out of a dominion, the influence of which will be seen and felt for centuries in the life of two continents; just as what is taking place in Turkey is the last fierce flickering up of Asiatic rule in Europe, on the very spot where twenty-four centuries ago Asiatic rule in Europe was thought to have been averted forever. The two, Ottoman rule in Europe, and Spanish rule in America, now stand at the bar of history; and, scanning the long four-century record of each, I have been unable to see what either has contributed to the accumulated possessions of the human race, or why both should not be classed among the many instances of the arrested civilization of a race, developing by degrees an irresistible tendency to retrogression."

This, one year ago; and while the embers of the last Greco-Turkish struggle, still white, were scarcely cold on the plain of Marathon. The time since passed has yielded fresh proof in support of this harsh judgment; for, if there is one historical law better and more irreversibly established than another, it is that, in the case of nations even more than in the case of individuals, their sins will find them out, — the day of

reckoning may not be escaped. Noticeably, has this proved so in the case of Spain. The year 1500 may be said to have found that country at the apex of her greatness. America had then been newly discovered; the Moor was just subdued. Nearly half a century before (1453) the Roman Empire had fallen, and, with the storming of Constantinople by the Saracens, disappeared from the earth. That event, it may be mentioned in passing, closed another world drama continuous through twenty-two centuries, — upon the whole the most wonderful of the series. And so, when Roman empire vanished, that of Spain began. It was ushered in by the landfall of Columbus; and when, just three hundred years later, in 1792, the subject was discussed in connection with its third centennial, the general verdict of European thinkers was that the discovery of America had, upon the whole, been to mankind the reverse of beneficent. This conclusion has since been commented upon with derision; yet, when made, it was right. The United States had in 1792 just struggled into existence, and its influence on the course of human events had not begun to make itself felt. Those who considered the subject had before them, therefore, only Spanish domination in America, and upon that their verdict cannot be gainsaid; for, from the year 1492 down, the history of Spain and Spanish domination has undeniably been one long series of crimes and violations of natural law, the penalty for which has not apparently even yet been exacted in full.

Of those national crimes four stand out in special prominence, constituting counts in a national indictment than which history shows few more formidable. These four were: (1) The expulsion, first, of the Jews, and then of the Moors, or Moriscoes, from Spain, late in the fifteenth and early in the sixteenth centuries; (2) the annals of "the Council of Blood" in the Netherlands, and the eighty years of internecine warfare through which Holland fought its way out from under Spanish rule; (3) the Inquisition, the most ingenious human machinery ever invented to root out and destroy whatever a people had that was intellectually most alert, inquisitive, and progressive; and, finally (4), the policy of extermination, and, where not of extermination, of cruel

oppression, systematically pursued towards the aborigines of America. Into the grounds on which the different counts of this indictment rest it would be impossible now to enter. Were it desirable so to do, time would not permit. Suffice it to say, the penalty had to be paid to the uttermost farthing; and one large instalment fell due, and was mercilessly exacted, during the year now drawing to its close. Spanish domination in America ceased,—the drama ended as it was entering on its fifth century,—and it can best be dismissed with the solemn words of Abraham Lincoln, uttered more than thirty years ago, when contemplating a similar expiation we were ourselves paying in blood and grief for a not dissimilar violation of an everlasting law,—“ Yet, if God wills that this mighty scourge continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘ The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether! ’ ”

But not only is this year memorable as witnessing the downfall and complete extirpation of that Spanish rule in America which began with Columbus, but the result, when it at last came about, was marked by incidents more curiously fitting and dramatic than it would have been possible for a Shakspeare to have conceived. Columbus, as we all know, stumbled, as it were, on America as he sailed west in search of Asia,—Cipango he was looking for, and he found Cuba. It is equally well known that he never discovered his mistake. When fourteen years later he died, it was in the faith that, through him, Europe had by a westward movement established itself in the archipelagoes of Asia. And now, at last, four centuries afterward, the blow which did most to end the American domination he established was struck in Asiatic waters; and, through it and the descendants of another race, America seems on the threshold of realizing the mistaken belief of Columbus, and by a westward movement establishing the European in that very archipelago Columbus failed to reach. The ways of Providence are certainly not less singular than slow in movement.

But the year just ending was veritably one of surprises,—

for the historical student it would, indeed, seem as if 1898 was destined to pass into the long record as almost the Year of Surprises. We now come to the consideration of some of these wholly unanticipated results from the American point of view. And in entering on this aspect of the question, it is necessary once more to remind you that we are doing it in the historical spirit, and from the historical point of view. We are stating facts not supposed to admit of denial. The argument and inferences to be drawn from those facts do not belong to this occasion. Some will reach one conclusion as to the future, and the bearing those facts have upon its probable development, and some will reach another conclusion; with these conclusions we have nothing to do. Our business is exclusively with the facts.

Speaking largely, but still with all necessary historical accuracy, America has been peopled, and its development, up to the present time, worked out through two great stocks of the European family, — the Spanish-speaking stock, and the English-speaking stock. In their development these two have pursued lines, clearly marked, but curiously divergent. Leaving the Spanish-speaking branch out of the discussion, as unnecessary to it, it may without exaggeration be said of the English-speaking branch that, from the beginning down to this year now ending, its development has been one long protest against, and divergence from, Old World methods and ideals. In the case of those descended from the Forefathers, — as we always designate the Plymouth colony, — this has been most distinctly marked, ethnically, politically, industrially.

America was the sphere where the European, as a colonist, a settler, first came on a large scale in contact with another race. Heretofore, in the Old World, when one stock had overrun another, — and history presented many examples of it, — the invading stock, after subduing, and to a great extent driving out, the stock which had preceded in the occupancy of a region, settled gradually down into a common possession, and, in the slow process of years, an amalgamation of stocks, more or less complete, took place. In America, with the Anglo-Saxon, and especially those of the New England type, this was not the case. Unlike the Frenchman at

the north, or the Spaniard at the south, the Anglo-Saxon showed no disposition to ally himself with the aborigines,—he evinced no faculty of dealing with inferior races, as they are called, except through a process of extermination. Here in Massachusetts this was so from the outset. Nearly every one here has read Longfellow's poem, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," and calls to mind the short, sharp conflict between the Plymouth captain and the Indian chief, Pecksuot, and how those God-fearing Pilgrims ruthlessly put to death by stabbing and hanging a sufficient number of the already plague-stricken and dying aborigines. That episode occurred in April, 1623, only a little more than two years after the landing we to-night celebrate, and was, so far as New England is concerned, the beginning of a series of wars which did not end until the Indian ceased to be an element in our civilization. When John Robinson, the revered pastor of the Plymouth church, received tidings at Leyden of that killing near Plymouth,—for Robinson never got across the Atlantic,—he wrote: "Oh, how happy a thing had it been, if you had converted some before you had killed any! There is cause to fear that, by occasion, especially of provocation, there may be wanting that tenderness of the life of man (made after God's image) which is meet. It is also a thing more glorious in men's eyes, than pleasing in God's or convenient for Christians, to be a terror to poor, barbarous people." This all has a very familiar sound. It is the refrain of nearly three centuries; but, as an historical fact, it is undeniable that, from 1623 down to the year now ending, the American Anglo-Saxon has in his dealings with what are known as the "inferior races" lacked "that tenderness of the life of man which is meet," and he has made himself "a terror to poor, barbarous people." How we of Massachusetts carried ourselves towards the aborigines here, the fearful record of the Pequot war remains everlasting to tell. How the country at large has carried itself in turn towards Indian, African, and Asiatic is matter of history. And yet it is equally matter of history that this carriage, term it what you will,—unchristian, brutal, exterminating,—has been the salvation of the race. It has saved the Anglo-Saxon stock from being a nation of half-breeds,—miscegenates, to

coin a word expressive of an idea. The Canadian half-breed, the Mexican, the mulatto, say what men may, are not virile or enduring races ; and that the Anglo-Saxon is none of these, and is essentially virile and enduring, is due to the fact that the less developed races perished before him. Nature is undeniably often brutal in its methods.

Again, and on the other hand, the Anglo-Saxon when he came to America left behind him, so far as he himself was concerned, feudalism and all things pertaining to caste, including what was then known in England, and is still known in Germany, as Divine Right. When he at last enunciated his political faith he put in the forefront of his declaration as "self-evident truths," the principles "that all men are created equal ;" that they are endowed with "certain inalienable rights," among them "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ;" and that governments derived "their just powers from the consent of the governed." Now what was meant here by the phrase "all men are created equal ?" We know they are not. They are not created equal in physical or mental endowment ; nor are they created with equal opportunity. The world bristles with inequalities, natural and artificial. This is so ; and yet the declaration is none the less true ; — true when made ; true now ; true for all future time. The reference was to the inequalities which always had marked, then did, and still do, mark, the political life of the Old World, — to Caste, Divine Right, Privilege. It declared that all men were created equal before the law, as before the Lord ;¹ and

¹"Obviously, men are not born equal in physical strength or in mental capacity, in beauty of form or health of body. Diversity or inequality in these respects is the law of creation. But this inequality is in no particular inconsistent with complete civil or political equality.

"The equality declared by our fathers in 1776, and made the fundamental law of Massachusetts in 1780, was *Equality before the Law*. Its object was to efface all political or civil distinctions, and to abolish all institutions founded upon birth. 'All men are *created* equal,' says the Declaration of Independence. 'All men are *born* free and equal,' says the Massachusetts Bill of Rights. These are not vain words. Within the sphere of their influence, no person can be *created*, no person can be *born*, with civil or political privileges not enjoyed equally by all his fellow-citizens ; nor can any institutions be established, recognizing distinctions of birth. Here is the Great Charter of every human being drawing vital breath upon this soil, whatever may be his conditions, and whoever may be his parents. He may be poor, weak, humble, or black, — he may be of Caucasian, Jewish, Indian, or Ethiopian race, — he may be born of French, German, English, or Irish extraction ; but before the Constitution of Massachusetts all these distinctions disappear. He is not poor, weak, humble, or black ; nor is he Caucasian, Jew, Indian, or Ethiopian ; nor is he

that, whether European, American, Asiatic, or African, they were endowed with an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And to this truth, as he saw it, Lincoln referred in those memorable words I have already cited bearing on our national crime in long forgetfulness of our own immutable principles. The fundamental, primal principle was indeed more clearly voiced by Lincoln than it has been voiced before, or since, in declaring again and elsewhere that to our nation, dedicated "to the proposition that all men are created equal," has by Providence been assigned the momentous task of "testing whether any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure," and "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The next cardinal principle in our policy as a race—that instinctive policy I have already referred to as divergent from Old World methods and ideals—was most clearly enunciated by Washington in his Farewell Address, that "the great rule for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible;" that it was "unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of [Old World] policies, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. . . . Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies."

Accepting this as firm ground from which to act, we afterwards put forth what is known as the Monroe Doctrine. Having announced that our purpose was, in homely language, to mind our own business, we warned the outer world that we did not propose to permit by that outer world any interference in what did not concern it. America was our field,—a field amply large for our development. It was therefore declared

French, German, English, or Irish; he is a MAN, the equal of all his fellow-men. He is one of the children of the State, which, like an impartial parent, regards all its offspring with an equal care. To some it may justly allot higher duties, according to higher capacities; but it welcomes all to its equal hospitable board. The State, imitating the divine justice, is no respecter of persons."—*Works of Charles Sumner, Vol. II., pp. 341-2.*

that, while we had never taken any part, nor did it comport with our policy to do so, in the wars of European politics, with the movements in this hemisphere we are, of necessity, more intimately connected. "We owe it, therefore, to candor to declare that we should consider any attempt [on the part of European powers] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."

On these principles of government and of foreign policy we have as a people now acted for more than seventy years. They have been exemplified and developed in various directions, and resulted in details—commercial, economic, and ethnic—which have given rise to political issues, long and hotly contested, but which, in their result from the purely historical point of view, do not admit of dispute. Commercially, we have adopted what is known as a system protective both of our industries and our labor. Economically, we have carefully eschewed large and costly armaments, and expensive governmental methods. Ethnically, we have avowed our desire to have as little contact as possible with less developed races, lamenting the presence of the African, and severely excluding the Asiatic. These facts, whether we as individuals and citizens wholly approve—or do not approve at all—of the course pursued and the results reached, admit of no dispute. Neither can it be denied that our attitude, whether it in all respects commanded the respect of foreign nations, or failed to command it, was accepted, and has prevailed. Striking illustrations of this at once suggest themselves.

In one respect especially was our attitude peculiar, and in its peculiarity we took great pride. It was largely moral; but, though largely moral, it had behind it the consciousness of strength in ourselves, and its recognition by others. In great degree, and relatively, an unarmed people, we looked with amaze, which had in it something of amusement, at the constantly growing armaments and war budgets of the nations of Europe. We saw them, like the warriors of the middle ages, crushed under the weight of their weapons of offence, and their preparations for defence. Meanwhile, fortunate in our geographical position,—weak for offence, but, in turn, unassailable,—we went in and out much as an unarmed man,

relying on his character, his recognized force, position, and peaceful calling, daily moves about in our frontier settlements and mining camps amid throngs of men armed to the teeth with revolvers and bowie knives. Yet, evidence was not lacking of the consideration yielded to us when we were called upon, or felt called upon, to assert ourselves. I will not refer to the episode of 1866, when, in accordance with the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, we intimated to France that her immediate withdrawal from Mexico was desired; for then we had not laid down the arms we had taken up in the Rebellion. But, without remonstrance even, France withdrew. In 1891, under circumstances not without grounds of aggravation against us, a mob in Valparaiso assaulted some seamen from our ships of war. Instant apology and redress were demanded; and the demand was complied with. Yet later, the course pursued by us in the Venezuela matter is too fresh in memory to call for more than a reference. These are all matters of history. When did our word fail to carry all desired weight?

Such were our standing, our traditional policy, and our record at the beginning of the year now ending. No proposition advanced admits, it is believed, of dispute historically. Into the events of the year 1898 it is not necessary to enter in any detail. They are in the minds of all. It is sufficient to say that the primary object for which we entered upon the late war with Spain was to bring to an end the long and altogether bad record of Spanish rule in America. In taking the steps deemed necessary to effect this result, Congress went out of its way, and publicly and formally put upon record its disclaimer of any intention to enter upon a war of conquest, asserting its determination, when Spanish domination was ended, to leave the government of Cuba, and presumably of any other islands similarly acquired, to the people thereof. As an incident to our naval operations on the Pacific, the island of Hawaii was then annexed to the United States as an extra-territorial possession, or coaling station, this being effected by a joint resolution of the two Houses of Congress, under the precedent of 1845 established in the case of Texas,—a method of procedure the constitutionality of which was at the time formally called in question

by the State of Massachusetts, and against which Mr. Webster made vigorous protest in the Senate. In thus possessing ourselves of Hawaii, the consent of the native inhabitants was not considered necessary; we dealt wholly with an oligarchical *de facto* government, representing the foreign element, mainly American, there resident.

Shortly after the acquisition of Hawaii, we, as the result of brilliant naval operations and successes, acquired possession of the harbor of Manila, in the Philippine archipelago, and finally the city and some adjacent territory were surrendered to us. A treaty was then negotiated, the power of Spain being completely broken, under which she abandoned all claims of sovereignty, not only over the island of Cuba, the original cause of war, but over various other islands in the Philippine, as well as in the West Indian, archipelagoes. These islands, in all said to be some 1,200 to 1,500 in number, are moreover not only inhabited by both natives and foreigners to the estimated number of ten to twelve million of souls, but they contain large cities and communities speaking different tongues, living under other laws, and having customs, manners, and traditions wholly unlike our own, and which, in the case of the Philippines, do not admit of assimilation. Situated in the tropics also, they cannot gradually become colonized by Americans, with or without the disappearance of the native population. The American can only go there for temporary residence.

A wholly new problem was thus suddenly presented to the people of the United States. On the one hand, it is asserted that, by destroying Spanish government in these islands, the United States has assumed responsibility for them, both to the inhabitants and to the world. This is a moral obligation. On the other hand, trade and commercial inducements are held out which would lead us to treat these islands simply as a commencement — the first instalment — in a system of unlimited extra-territorial dependencies and imperial expansion. With these responsibilities and obligations we here this evening have nothing to do, any more than we have to do with the expediency or probable results of the policy of colonial expansion, when once fairly adopted and finally entered upon. These hereafter will be, but are not yet, historical questions;

and we are merely historical inquirers. We, therefore, no matter what others may do, must try to confine ourselves to our own proper business and functions.

My purpose, therefore, is not to argue for or against what is now proposed, but simply to test historically some of the arguments I have heard most commonly advanced in favor of the proposed policy of expansion, and thus see to what they apparently lead in the sequence of human, and more especially of American, events. Do they indicate an historic continuity? Or do they result in what is geologically known as a "fault," — a movement, as the result of force, through which a stratum, once continuous, becomes disconnected?

In the first place, then, as respects the inhabitants of the vastly greater number of the dependencies already acquired, and, under the policy of imperialistic expansion, hereafter to be acquired. It is argued that we, as a people at once dominant and Christian, are under an obligation to avail ourselves of the opportunity the Almighty, in his infinite wisdom, has thrust upon us, — some say the plain call he has uttered to us, — to go forth and impart to the barbarian and the heathen the blessings of liberty and the Bible. A mission is imposed upon us. Viewed in the cold, pitiless light of history, — and that is the only way we here can view them, — "divine missions" and "providential calls" are questionable things; things the assumption and fulfilment of which are apt to be at variance. So far as the American is concerned, as I have already pointed out, the historic precedents are not encouraging. Whatever his theories, ethnical, political, or religious, his practice has been as pronounced as it was masterful. From the earliest days at Wessagusset and in the Pequot war, down to the very last election held in North Carolina, — from 1623 to 1898, — the knife and the shotgun have been far more potent and active instruments in his dealings with the inferior races than the code of liberty or the output of the Bible Society. The record speaks for itself. So far as the Indian is concerned, the story has been told by Mrs. Jackson in her earnest, eloquent protest, entitled "A Century of Dishonor." It has received epigrammatic treatment in the saying tersely enunci-

ated by one of our military commanders, and avowedly accepted by the others, that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." So far as the African is concerned, the similar apothegm once was that "the black man has no rights the white man is bound to respect;" or, as Stephen A. Douglas defined his position before an applauding audience, "I am for the white man as against the black man, and for the black man against the alligator." Recent lynching and shotgun experiences, too fresh in memory to call for reminder, and too painful in detail to describe, give us at least reason to pause before we leave our own hearthstone to seek new and distant fields for missionary labors. It remains to consider the Asiatic. The racial antipathy of the American towards him has been more intense than towards any other species of the human race. This, as an historical fact, has been recently imbedded in our statute-book, having previously been illustrated in a series of outrages and massacres, with the sickening details of some of which it was at one time my misfortune to be officially familiar. Under these circumstances, so far as the circulation of the Bible and the extension of the blessings of liberty are concerned, history affords small encouragement to the American to assume new obligations. He has been, and now is, more than merely delinquent in the fulfilment of obligations heretofore thrust upon him, or knowingly assumed. In this respect his instinct has proved much more of a controlling factor than his ethics, — the shotgun has unfortunately been more constantly in evidence than the Bible. As a prominent "expansionist" New England member of the present Congress has recently declared in language, brutal perhaps in directness, but withal commendably free from cant: "China is succumbing to the inevitable, and the United States, if she would not retire to the background, must advance along the line with the other great nations. She must acquire new territory, providing new markets over which she must maintain control. The Anglo-Saxon advances into the new regions with a Bible in one hand and a shotgun in the other. The inhabitants of those regions that he cannot convert with the aid of the Bible and bring into his markets, he gets rid of with the shotgun. It is but another demonstration of the survival of

the fittest." (Hon. C. A. Sulloway, Rochester, N. H., Nov. 22, 1898.)

Next as regards our fundamental principles of equality of human rights, and the consent of the governed as the only just basis of all government. The presence of the inferior races on our own soil, and our new problems connected with them in our dependencies, have led to much questioning of the correctness of those principles, which, for its outspoken frankness, at least, is greatly to be commended. It is argued that these, as principles, in the light of modern knowledge and conditions, are of doubtful general truth and limited application. True, when confined and carefully applied to citizens of the same blood and nationality; questionable, when applied to human beings of different race in one nationality; manifestly false, in the case of races less developed, and in other, especially tropical, countries.¹ As fundamental prin-

¹ Historically speaking, the assertion in the Declaration of Independence has been fruitful of dispute. The very evening the present paper was read at Lexington the Mayor of Boston, in a public address elsewhere, alluded to the "imprudent generalizations of our forefathers," referring, doubtless, to what Rufus Choate, forty-two years before, described as "the glittering and sounding generalities of natural right" to be found in the Declaration, "that passionate and eloquent manifesto." Mr. Calhoun declared (1848) that the claim of human equality set forth in the Declaration was "the most false and dangerous of all political errors," which, after resting a long time "dormant," had, in process of time, begun "to germinate and produce its poisonous fruits." Mr. Pettit, a Senator from Indiana, pronounced it in 1854, "a self-evident lie." In the famous Lincoln-Douglas debate in Illinois (1860) the question reappeared, Mr. Douglas contending that the Declaration applied only to "the white people of the United States;" while Mr. Lincoln, in reply, asserted that "the entire records of the world, from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for one single affirmation, from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration." The contention of Mr. Douglas had recently again made its appearance in the press as something too indisputable to admit of discussion. It is asserted that, in penning the Declaration, Mr. Jefferson could not possibly have intended to include those then actually held as slaves. On this point Mr. Jefferson himself should, it would seem, be accepted as a competent witness. Referring to the denial of his "inalienable rights" to the African, he declared at a later day, "I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just." What he meant will, however, probably continue matter for confident newspaper assertions just so long as anybody in this country wants to make out, as did Stephen A. Douglas in 1860, a plausible pretext for subjugating somebody else, — Indian, African, or Asiatic. As Mr. Lincoln expressed it, "The assertion that all men are created equal was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain, and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that but for future use. Its author meant it to be, as, thank God, it is now proving itself, a stumbling block to all those who, in after times, might seek to turn a free people back into the paths of despotism. They knew the proneness of prosperity to breed tyrants, and they meant, when such should reappear in this fair land, and commence their vocation, they should find left for them at least one hard nut to crack." — *Works*, Vol. I., p. 233.

ciples, it is admitted, they were excellent for a young people struggling into recognition and limiting its attention narrowly to what only concerned itself; but have we not manifestly outgrown them, now that we ourselves have developed into a great World Power? For such there was and necessarily always will be, as between the superior and the inferior races, a manifest common sense foundation in caste, and in the rule of might when it presents itself in the form of what we are pleased to call Manifest Destiny. As to government being conditioned on the consent of the governed, it is obviously the bounden duty of the superior race to hold the inferior race in peaceful tutelage, and protect it against itself; and, furthermore, when it comes to deciding the momentous question of what races are superior and what inferior, what dominant and what subject, that is of necessity a question to be settled between the superior race and its own conscience; and one in regard to the correct settlement of which it indicates a tendency at once unpatriotic and "pessimistic," to assume that America could by any chance decide otherwise than correctly. Upon that score we must put implicit confidence in the sound instincts and Christian spirit of the dominant, that is, the stronger race.

It is the same with that other fundamental principle with which the name of Lexington is, from the historical point of view, so closely associated, — I refer, of course, to the revolutionary contention that representation is a necessary adjunct to taxation. This principle also, it is frankly argued, we have outgrown, in presence of our new responsibilities; and, as between the superior and inferior races, it is subject to obvious limitations. Here again, as between the policy of the "Open Door" and the Closed-Colonial-Market policy, the superior race is amenable to its own conscience only. It will doubtless on all suitable and convenient occasions bear in mind that it is a "Trustee for Civilization."

Finally, as respects entangling foreign alliances, and their necessary consequents, costly and burdensome armaments and large standing armies, we are again advised that, having ceased to be children, we should put away childish things. Having become a great World Power we must become a corresponding War Power. We are assured by high author-

ity that, were Washington now alive, it cannot be questioned he would in all these respects modify materially the views expressed in the Farewell Address, as being obviously inapplicable to existing conditions. Under these circumstances, and in view of the obligations we have assumed, the President, and Secretaries of War and the Navy, recommend an establishment the annual cost of which (\$200,000,000), exclusive of military pensions, is in excess of the largest of those European War Budgets, over the crushing influence of which we have expressed a traditional wonder, not unmixed with pity for the unfortunate tax-payer.

Historically speaking, I believe these are all facts, susceptible of verification. I do not mean to say that the arguments developing obvious limitations in the application of the principles of the Declaration and the Constitution have been avowedly accepted by our representatives, or officially incorporated into our domestic and foreign policy. I do assert as an historical fact that these arguments have been advanced, and are meeting, both in Congress and with the press, a large degree of acceptance. And hence comes a singular and most significant conclusion from which, historically, there seems to be no escape. It may or it may not be fortunate and right; it may or it may not lead to beneficent future results; it may or it may not contribute to the good of mankind. Those questions belong elsewhere than in the rooms of an historical society. Upon them we are not called to pass,—they belong to the politician, the publicist, the philosopher, not to us. But, as historical investigators, and so observing the sequence of events, it cannot escape our notice that on every one of the fundamental principles discussed,—whether ethnic, economical, or political,—we abandon the traditional and distinctively American grounds and accept those of Europe, and especially of Great Britain, which heretofore we have made it the basis of our faith to deny and repudiate.

With this startling proposition in mind, consider again the several propositions advanced; and first, as regards the so-called inferior races. Our policy towards them, instinctive and formulated, has been either to exclude or destroy, or to leave them in the fullness of time to work out their own

destiny, undisturbed by us ; fully believing that, in this way, we in the long run best subserved the interests of mankind. Europe, and Great Britain especially, adopted the opposite policy. They held that it was incumbent on the superior to go forth and establish dominion over the inferior race, and to hold and develop vast imperial possessions and colonial dependencies. They saw their interest and duty in developing systems of docile tutelage ; we sought our inspirations in the rough school of self-government. Under this head the result then is distinct, clean cut, indisputable. To this conclusion have we come at last. The Old World, Europe and Great Britain, were, after all, right, and we of the New World have been wrong. From every point of view, — religious, ethnic, commercial, political, — we cannot, it is now claimed, too soon abandon our traditional position and assume theirs. Again, Europe and Great Britain have never admitted that men were created equal, or that the consent of the governed was a condition of government. They have, on the contrary, emphatically denied both propositions. We now concede that, after all, there was great basis for their denial ; that, certainly, it must be admitted, our forefathers were hasty at least in reaching their conclusions, — they generalized too broadly. We do not frankly avow error, and we still think the assent of the governed to a government a thing desirable to be secured, under suitable circumstances and with proper limitations ; but, if it cannot conveniently be secured, we are advised on New England senatorial authority that "the consent of some of the governed" will be sufficient, we ourselves selecting those proper to be consulted. Thus in such cases as certain islands of the Antilles, Hawaii, and the communities of Asia, we admit that, so far as the principles at the basis of the Declaration are concerned, Great Britain was right, and our ancestors were, not perhaps wrong, but too general, and of the eighteenth century, in their statements. To that extent, we have outgrown the Declaration of 1776, and have become as wise now as Great Britain was then. At any rate we are not above learning. As was long ago said, — "Only dead men and idiots never change ;" and the people of the United States are nothing unless open-minded.

So, also, as respects the famous Boston "tea-party," and taxation without representation. Great Britain then affirmed this right in the case of colonies and dependencies. Taught by the lesson of our War of Independence, she has since abandoned it. We now take it up, and are to-day, as one of the new obligations towards the heathen imposed upon us by Providence, formulating systems of imposts and tariffs for our new dependencies, wholly distinct from our own, and directly inhibited by our constitution, in regard to which systems those dependencies have no representative voice. They are not to be consulted as to the kind of door, "open" or "closed," behind which they are to exist. In taking this position it is difficult to see why we must not also incidentally admit that, in the great contention preceding our War of Independence, the first armed clash of which resounded here in Lexington, Great Britain was more nearly right than the exponents of the principles for which those "embattled farmers" contended.

Again, consider the Monroe Doctrine, entangling foreign alliances, and the consequent and costly military and naval establishments. The Monroe Doctrine had two sides, the abstention of the Old World from interference in American affairs, based on our abstention from interference in the affairs of the Old World. But it is now argued we have outgrown the Monroe Doctrine, or at least the latter branch of it. It is certainly so considered in Europe; for, only a few days ago, so eminent an authority as Lord Farrar exultingly exclaimed in addressing the Cobden Club,—"America has burned the swaddling clothes of the Monroe Doctrine." Indeed we have, in discussion at least, gone far in advance of the mere burning of cast-off infantile clothing, and alliances with Great Britain and Japan, as against France and Russia, are freely mooted, with a view to the forcible partition of China, to which we are to be a party, and of it a beneficiary. For it is already avowed that the Philippines are but a "stopping-place" on the way to the continent of Asia; and China, unlike Poland, is inhabited by an "inferior race," in regard to whom, as large possible consumers of surplus products, Providence has imposed on us obvious obligations, material as well as benevolent and religious, which it would

be unlike ourselves to disregard. It is the mandate of duty, we are told, — the nations of Europe obey it, and can we do less than they? “Isolation” it is then argued is but another name for an attention to one’s own business which may well become excessive, and result in selfishness. It is true that the nations of the Old World have not heretofore erred conspicuously in this respect; and as the “Balance of Power” was the word-juggle with which to conjure up wars and armaments in the eighteenth century, so the “Division of Trade” may not impossibly prove the similar conjuring word-juggle of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, “isolation” is not compatible with the policy of a Great Nation under a call to assert itself as a World Power. Then follows the familiar argument in favor of costly military and naval establishments. But, upon this head it is needless to restate our traditional policy, — our jealousy as a people of militarism and large standing armies, to be used, if occasion calls, as a reserve police. Our record thereon is so plain that repetition grows tedious. The record of Europe, and especially of Great Britain as distinguished from other European powers, has been equally plain, and is no less indisputable. In this respect, also, always under compulsion, we now admit our error. Costly armies are necessary to the maintenance of order, Heaven’s first law; and World Powers cannot maintain peace, and themselves, without powerful navies and frequent coaling stations.

Finally, even on such matters as the Protective System and the encouragement of American Labor, as against the “Pauper Labor” of Europe and of the inferior races, Great Britain has for half a century now advocated the principle of unrestricted industry and free trade, — that is the “Open Door” policy logically carried to its final results. We have denied it, establishing what we in time grew to call the distinctive American system. It is, however, now asserted that “Trade follows the Flag,” and that, as respects dependencies at least, the “Open Door” policy is the best policy. If “Trade follows the Flag” in dependencies, and, by so doing, affords the American producer all needful protection and every fair advantage in those dependencies, it is not at once apparent why it fails so to do at home. Is it less docile

to the flag, less in harmony with and subservient to it, in the United States, within our own limits, than in remote lands under that flag beyond the seas? And, if so, how is such an apparent anomaly accounted for? But with this question we are not concerned. That problem is for the economist to solve, for in character it is commercial, not historical. The point with us is that again, as regards the "Open Door," — free trade and no favor, so far as all outside competition is concerned, American labor and "pauper" labor being equally outside, — on this long and hotly contested point, also, England appears on the face of things to have had after all much the best of the argument.

As regards "Pauper Labor," indeed, the reversal contemplated of established policy in favor of European methods is specially noteworthy. The labor of Asia is undeniably less well paid even than that of Europe; but it is now proposed, by a single act, to introduce into our industrial system ten millions of Asiatics, either directly, or through their products sold in open competition with our own; or, if we do not do that, to hold them, ascribed to the soil in a sort of old Saxon serfdom, with the function assigned them of consuming our surplus products, but without in return sending us theirs. The great counterbalancing consideration will not, of course, be forgotten that, like the English in India, we also bestow on them the Blessings of Liberty and the Bible; provided, always, that liberty does not include freedom to go to the United States, and the Bible does include the excellent Old Time and Old World precept (Coloss. 3: 22), "Servants, obey in all things your masters."

It is the same in other respects. It seems to be admitted by the President, and by the leading authorities on the imperialistic policy, that it can only be carried to successful results through the agency of a distinct governing class. Accordingly administration through the agency of military or naval officers is strongly urged both by the President and by Captain Mahan. Other advocates of the policy urge its adoption on the ground, very distinctly avowed, that it will necessitate an established, recognized Civil Service, modelled, they add, on that of Great Britain. If, they then argue, Great Britain can extend — as, indeed, she unquestionably

has extended—her system of dependencies all over the globe, developing them into the most magnificent empire the world ever saw, it is absurd, unpatriotic, and pessimistic to doubt that we can do the same. Are we not of the same blood, and the same speech? This is all historically true. Historically it is equally true that, to do it, we must employ means similar to those Great Britain has employed. In other words, modelling ourselves on Great Britain, we must slowly and methodically develop and build up a recognized and permanent governing and official class. The heathen and barbarian need to be studied, and dealt with intelligently and on a system; they cannot be successfully managed on any principle of rotation in office, much less one which ascribes the spoils of office to the victors at the polls. What these advocates of Imperialism say is unquestionably true: The political methods now in vogue in American cities are not adapted to the government of dependencies.

The very word "Imperial" is, indeed, borrowed from the Old World. As applied to a great system of colonial dominion and foreign dependencies it is English, and very modern English, also, for it was first brought into vogue by the late Earl of Beaconsfield in 1879, when, by Act of Parliament introduced by him, the Queen of England was made Empress of India. It was then he enunciated that doctrine of *imperium et libertas*, the adoption of which we are now considering. While it may be wise and sound, it indisputably is British.

Thus, curiously enough, whichever way we turn and however we regard it, at the close of more than a century of independent existence we find ourselves, historically speaking, involved in a mesh of contradictions with our past. Under a sense of obligation, impelled by circumstances, perhaps to a degree influenced by ambition and commercial greed, we have one by one abandoned our distinctive national tenets, — and accepted in their place, though in some modified forms, — the old-time European tenets and policies, which we supposed the world, actuated largely by our example, was about forever to discard. Our whole record as a people is, of course, then ransacked and subjected to microscopic investigation, and every petty disregard of principle, any wrong heretofore silently, perhaps sadly, ignored, each unobserved or disre-

garded innovation of the past, is magnified into a precedent justifying anything and everything in the future. If we formerly on some occasion swallowed a gnat, why now, is it asked, strain at a camel? Truths once accepted as "self-evident," since become awkward of acceptance, were ever thus pettifogged out of the path, and fundamental principles have in this way prescriptively been tampered with. It is now nearly a century and a quarter ago, when Great Britain was contemplating the subjection of her American dependencies, that Edmund Burke denounced "tampering" with the "ingenuous and noble roughness of truly constitutional materials," as "the odious vice of restless and unstable minds." Historically speaking it is not unfair to ask if this is less so in the United States in 1898 than it was in Great Britain in 1775.

What is now proposed, therefore, examined in connection with our principles and traditional policy as a nation, does apparently indicate a break in continuity, — historically, it will probably constitute what is known in geology as a "fault." Indeed, it is almost safe to say that history hardly records any change of base and system on the part of a great people at once so sudden, so radical, and so pregnant with consequences. To the optimist,—he who has no dislike to "Old Jewry," as the proper receptacle for worn-out garments, personal or political,—the outlook is inspiring. He insensibly recalls and repeats those fine lines of Tennyson :

"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings: like gauze they grew:
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

To others, older perhaps, but at any rate more deeply impressed with the difference apt to develop between dreams and actualities, the situation calls to mind a comparison, more historical it is true, but less inspiriting so far as a commitment to the new policy is concerned. At the risk, possi-

bly, of offending some of those present, I will venture to institute it. In the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, I find this incident recorded: "The devil taketh him [the Saviour] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Now, historically speaking, and as a matter of scriptural exegesis, that this passage should be accepted literally is not supposable. Satan, on the occasion referred to, must not be taken to have presented himself to the Saviour *in propria persona*, with his attributes of horns, tail, and cloven hoof, and made an outright proposition of extra-territorial sovereignty. It was a parable. He who had assumed a lofty moral attitude was tempted by worldly inducements to adopt a lower attitude, — that, in a word, common among men. It was a whispering to Christ of what among nations, is known as "Manifest Destiny;" in that case, however, as possibly in others, it so chanced that the whispering was not from the Almighty, but from Satan. Now if, instead of recognizing the source whence the temptation came, and sternly saying, "Get thee hence, Satan," Christ had seen the proposition as a new Mission, — thought, in fact, that he heard a distinct call to Duty, — and so, accepting a Responsibility thrust upon him, had hurried down from the "exceeding high mountain," and proceeded at once to lay in a supply of weapons and to don defensive armor, renouncing his peaceful mission, he would have done exactly — what Mohammed did six centuries later!

I do not for a moment mean to suggest that, as respects the voice of "Manifest Destiny," there is any similarity between the case of the Saviour and that which we, as a people, are now considering. I am not a prophet, nor do I claim prophetic insight. We are merely historical investigators, and, as such, not admitted into the councils of the Almighty. Others doubtless are, or certainly claim to be. They know every time, and at once, whether it is the inspiration of God or the devil; and forthwith proclaim it from the house-tops. We must admit — at any rate no evidence in our possession

enables us to deny — the confidential relations such claim to have with either or both of the agencies in question, — the Divine or the Infernal. All I now have in mind is to call attention to the obvious similarity of the positions. As compared with the ideals and tenets then in vogue, — principles of manhood, equality before the law, freedom, peace on earth and good-will to men, — the United States, heretofore and seen in a large way, has, among nations, assumed a peculiar, and, from the moral point of view, unquestionably a lofty attitude. Speaking historically it might, and with no charge of levity, be compared with a similar moral attitude assumed among men eighteen centuries before by the Saviour. It discredited armaments and warfare; it advocated arbitrations, and bowed to their awards; spreading its arms and protection over the New World, it refused to embroil itself in the complications of the Old; above all, it set a not unprofitable example to the nations of benefits incident to minding one's own business, and did not arrogate to itself the character of a favorite and inspired instrument in the hands of God. It even went so far as to assume that, in working out the inscrutable ways of Providence, character, self-restraint, and moral grandeur were in the long run as potent in effecting results as iron-clads and gatling-guns.

Those who now advocate a continuance of this policy are, as neatly as wittily, referred to in discussion, "for want of a better name," as "Little Americans," just as in history the believers in the long-run efficacy of the doctrines of Christ might be termed "Little Gospellers," to distinguish them from the admirers of the later, but more brilliant and imperial, dispensation of Mohammed. That the earlier, and less immediately ambitious, doctrine was, in the case of the United States, only temporary, and is now outgrown, and must, therefore, be abandoned in favor of Old World methods, especially those pursued with such striking success by Great Britain, is possible. As historical investigators we have long since learned that it is the unexpected which in the development of human affairs is most apt to occur. Who, for instance, in our own recent history could ever have foreseen that, in the inscrutable ways of the Almighty, the great triumph of Slavery in the annexation of Texas, and the spolia-

tion of that inferior race which inhabited Mexico, was, within fifteen years only, to result in what Lincoln called that "terrible war" in which every drop of blood ever drawn by the lash was paid by another drawn by the sword? Again, in May, 1856, a Representative of South Carolina struck down a Senator from Massachusetts in the Senate-chamber at Washington; in January, 1865, Massachusetts battalions bivouacked beside the smoking ruins of South Carolina's capital. Verily, as none know better than we, the ways of Providence are mysterious, and past finding out. None the less, though it cannot be positively asserted that the world would not have been wiser, more advanced, and better ordered had Christ, when on that "exceeding high mountain," heard in the words then whispered in his ear a manifest call of Duty, and felt a Responsibility thrust upon him to secure the kingdoms of the earth for the Blessings of Liberty and the Bible by so small a sacrifice as making an apparently meaningless obeisance to Satan, yet we can certainly say that the world would now have been very different from what it is had he so done. And so in the case of the United States, though we cannot for a moment assert that its fate and the future of the world will not be richer, better, and brighter from its abandonment of New World traditions and policies in favor of the traditions and policies of the Old World, we can say without any hesitation that the course of history will be greatly changed by the so doing.

In any event the experiment will be one of surpassing interest to the historical observer. Some years ago James Russell Lowell was asked by the French historian, Guizot, how long the Republic of the United States might reasonably be expected to endure. Mr. Lowell's reply has always been considered peculiarly happy. "So long," said he, "as the ideas of its founders continue dominant." In due course of time we, or those who follow us, will know whether Mr. Lowell diagnosed the situation correctly, or otherwise. Meanwhile, I do not know how I can better bring to an end this somewhat lengthy contribution to the occasion, than by repeating, as singularly applicable to the conditions in which we find ourselves, these verses from a recent poem, than which I have heard none in the days that now are which

strike a deeper or a truer chord, or one more appropriate to this New England Paschal eve :

“The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

“Far-called our navies melt away,
On dune and headline sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre !
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

“If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the law—
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !

“For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on thy people, Lord !
Amen.”

Taken in connection with the foregoing paper, the following letter, addressed to the Hon. Carl Schurz, is self-explanatory:

BOSTON, December 21, 1898.

MY DEAR MR. SCHURZ:

In a recent letter you kindly suggest that I submit to you a sketch of what, I think, should be said in an address such as it is proposed should now be put forth by the Anti-Imperialist League to the people of the United States.

I last evening read a paper before the Lexington Historical Society, in which I discussed the question of extra-territorial expansion from the historical point of view. A copy of this paper I hope soon to forward you. Meanwhile, there is one aspect, and, to my mind, the all-important aspect of the question, which, in addressing an historical society, was not germane. I refer to the question of a practical policy to be pursued by us, as a nation, under existing conditions. That Spain has abandoned all claim of sovereignty over the Philippine islands admits of no question. Whether the United States has accepted the sovereignty thus abandoned is still an open question; but this I do not regard as material. Nevertheless, we are confronted by a fact; and, whenever we criticise the policy up to this time pursued, we are met with — an inquiry as to what we have to propose in place of it. We are invited to stop finding fault with others, and to suggest — some feasible alternative policy ourselves.

To this we must, therefore, in fairness, address ourselves. It is, in my judgment, useless to attempt to carry on the discussion merely in the negative form. As opponents of an inchoate policy we must, in place of what we object to, propose something positive, or we must abandon the field. Accepting the alternative, I now want to suggest a positive policy for the consideration of those who feel as we feel. I wish your judgment upon it.

There has, it seems to me, been a great deal of idle "Duty," "Mission," and "Call" talk on the subject of our recent acquisition of "Islands beyond the Sea," and the necessity of adopting some policy, commonly described as "Imperial," in dealing with them. This policy is, in the minds

of most people who favor it, to be indirectly modelled on the policy heretofore so successfully pursued under somewhat similar conditions by Great Britain. It involves, as I tried to point out in the Lexington paper I have referred to, the abandonment or reversal of all the fundamental principles of our government since its origin, and of the foreign policy we have heretofore pursued. This, I submit, is absolutely unnecessary. Another and substitute policy, purely American, as contradistinguished from the European or British, known as "Imperial," policy, can readily be formulated.

This essentially American policy would be based both upon our cardinal political principles, and our recent foreign experiences. It is commonly argued that, having destroyed the existing government in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, we have assumed a political responsibility, and are under a moral obligation to provide another government in place of that which by our action has ceased to exist. What has been our course heretofore under similar circumstances? Precedents, I submit, at once suggest themselves. Precedents, too, directly in point, and within your and my easy recollection.

I refer to the course pursued by us towards Mexico in the year 1848, and again in 1866; towards Hayti for seventy years back; and towards Venezuela as recently as three years ago. It is said that the inhabitants of the islands of the Antilles, and much more those of the Philippine archipelago, are as yet unfitted to maintain a government; and that they should be kept in a condition of "tutelage" until they are fitted so to do. It is further argued that a stable government is necessary, and that it is out of the question for us to permit a condition of chronic disturbance and scandalous unrest to exist so near our own borders as Cuba and Porto Rico. Yet how long, I would ask, did that condition exist in Mexico? And with what results? How long has it existed in Hayti? Has the government of Venezuela ever been "stable"? Have we found it necessary or thought it best to establish a governmental protectorate in any of those immediately adjacent regions?

What has been; historically, our policy — the American, as distinguished from the European and British policy —

towards those communities, — two of them Spanish, one African? So far as foreign powers are concerned, we have laid down the principle of "Hands-off." So far as their own government was concerned, we insisted that the only way to learn to walk was to try to walk, and that the history of mankind did not show that nations placed under systems of "tutelage," — taught to lean for support on a superior power, — ever acquired the faculty of independent action.

Of this, with us, fundamental truth, the British race itself furnishes a very notable example. In the forty-fourth year of the Christian era the island of Great Britain was occupied by what the "Imperial" Romans adjudged to be an inferior race. To the Romans the Britons unquestionably were inferior. Every child's history contains an account of the course then pursued by the superior towards that inferior race, and its results. The Romans occupied Great Britain, and they occupied it hard upon four centuries, holding the people in "tutelage," and protecting them against themselves, as well as against their enemies. With what result? So emasculated and incapable of self-government did the people of England become during their "tutelage" that, when Rome at last withdrew, they found themselves totally unfitted for self-government, much more for facing a foreign enemy. As the last, and best, historian of the English people tells us, the purely despotic system of the imperial government "by crushing all local independence, crushed all local vigor. Men forgot how to fight for their country when they forgot how to govern it."¹ The end was that, through six centuries more, England was overrun, first by those of one race, and then by those of another, until the Normans established themselves in it as conquerors; and then, and not until then, the deteriorating effect of a system of long continued "tutelage" ceased to be felt, and the islanders became by degrees the most energetic, virile, and self-sustaining of races. As nearly, therefore, as can be historically stated, it took eight centuries for the people of England to overcome the injurious influence of four centuries of just such a system as it is now proposed by us to inflict on the Philippines.²

¹ Green's Short History (III. Ed.). Vol. I. p. 9.

² The Roman legions were withdrawn from Great Britain in 410; Magna Charta

Hindostan would furnish another highly suggestive example of the educational effects of "tutelage" on a race. After a century and a half of that British "tutelage," what progress has India made towards fitness for self-government? Is the end in sight?

From the historical point of view, it is instructive to note the exactly different results reached through the truly American policy we have pursued in the not dissimilar cases of Hayti and Mexico. While Hayti, it is true, has failed to make great progress in one century, it has made quite as much progress as England made during any equal period immediately after Rome withdrew from it. And that degree of slowness in growth, which with equanimity has been endured by us in Hayti, could certainly be endured by us in islands on the coast of Asia. It cannot be gainsaid that, through our insisting on the policy of non-interference ourselves, and of non-interference by European nations, Hayti has been brought into a position where it is on the high road to better things in future. That has been the result of the prescriptive American policy. With Mexico, the case is far stronger. We all know that in 1848, after our war of spoliation, we had to bolster up a semblance of a government for Mexico, with which to negotiate a treaty of peace. Mexico at that time was reduced by us to a condition of utter anarchy. Under the theory now gaining in vogue, it would then have been our plain duty to make of Mexico an extra-territorial dependency, and protect it against itself. We wisely took a different course. Like other Spanish communities in America, Mexico than passed through a succession of revolutions, from which it became apparent the people were not in a fit condition for self-government. Nevertheless, sternly insisting on non-interference by outside powers, we ourselves wisely left that country to work out its own salvation in its own way.

In 1862, when the United States was involved in the War

was signed in June, 1215, and the reign of French kings over England came to a close in 1217. It is a striking illustration of the deliberation with which natural processes work themselves out, that the period which elapsed between the withdrawal of Rome from England, and the recovery of England by the English, should have exceeded by more than a century the time which has as yet elapsed since England was thus recovered.

of the Rebellion, the Europeans took advantage of the situation to invade Mexico, and to establish there a "stable government." They undertook to protect that people against themselves, and to erect for them a species of protectorate, such as we now propose for the Philippines. As soon as our war was over, we insisted upon the withdrawal of Europe from Mexico. What followed is matter of recent history. It is unnecessary to recall it. We did not reduce Mexico into a condition of "tutelage," or establish over it a "protectorate" of our own. We, on the contrary, insisted that it should stand on its own legs; and, by so doing, learn to stand firmly on them, just as a child learns to walk, by being compelled to try to walk, not by being kept everlastingly in "leading strings." This was the American, as contradistinguished from the European policy; and Mexico to-day walks firmly.

Finally take the case of Venezuela in 1895. I believe I am not mistaken when I say that, during the twenty-five preceding years, Venezuela had undergone almost as many revolutions. It certainly had not enjoyed a stable government. Through disputes over questions of boundary, Great Britain proposed to confer that indisputable blessing upon a considerable region. We interfered under a most questionable extension of the Monroe Doctrine, and asserted the principle of "Hands-off." Having done this,—having in so far perpetuated what we now call the scandal of anarchy,—we did not establish "tutelage," or a protectorate, ourselves. We wisely left Venezuela to work out its destiny in its own way, and in the fullness of time. That policy was far-seeing, beneficent, and strictly American in 1895. Why, then, make almost indecent haste to abandon it in 1898?

Instead, therefore, of finding our precedents in the experience of England, or that of any other European power, I would suggest that the true course for this country now to pursue is exactly the course we have heretofore pursued under similar conditions. Let us be true to our own traditions, and follow our own precedents. Having relieved the Spanish islands from the dominion of Spain, we should declare concerning them a policy of "Hands-off," both on our own part and on the part of other powers. We should say that the

independence of those islands is morally guaranteed by us as a consequence of the treaty of Paris, and then leave them just as we have left Hayti, and just as we left Mexico and Venezuela, to adopt for themselves such form of government as the people thereof are ripe for. In the cases of Mexico and Venezuela, and in the case of Hayti, we have not found it necessary to interfere ever or at all. It is not yet apparent why we should find it necessary to interfere with islands so much more remote from us than Hayti, and than Mexico and Venezuela, as are the Philippines.

In this matter we can thus well afford to be consistent, as well as logical. Our fundamental principles, those of the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Monroe Doctrine, have not yet been shown to be unsound — why should we be in such a hurry to abandon them? Our precedents are close at hand, and satisfactory — why look away from them to follow those of Great Britain? Why need we, all of a sudden, be so very English and so altogether French, even borrowing their nomenclature of "imperialism?" Why can not we, too, in the language of Burke, be content to set our feet "in the tracks of our forefathers, where we can neither wander nor stumble?" The only difficulty in the way of our so doing seems to be that we are in such a desperate hurry; while natural influences and methods, though in the great end indisputably the wisest and best, always require time in which to work themselves out to their results. Wiser than the Almighty in our own conceit, we think to get there at once; the "there" in this case being everlasting "tutelage," as in India, instead of ultimate self-government, as in Mexico.

The policy heretofore pursued by us in such cases, — the policy of "Hands-off," and "Walk alone," is distinctly American; it is not European, not even British. It recognizes the principles of our Declaration of Independence. — It recognizes the truth that all just government exists by the consent of the governed. It recognizes the existence of the Monroe Doctrine. In a word, it recognizes every principle and precedent, whether natural or historical, which has from the beginning lain at the foundation of our American polity. It does not attempt the hypocritical contradiction in

terms, of pretending to elevate a people into a self-sustaining condition through the leading-string process of "tutelage." It appeals to our historical experience, applying to present conditions the lessons of Hayti, Mexico, and Venezuela. In dealing with those cases, we did not find a great standing army or an enormous navy necessary; and, if not then, why now? Why such a difference between the Philippines and Hayti? Is Cuba larger or nearer to us than Mexico? When, therefore, in future they ask us what course and policy we Anti-Imperialists propose, our answer should be that we propose to pursue towards the islands of Antilles and the Philippines the same common-sense course and truly American policy which were by us heretofore pursued with such signal success in the cases of Hayti, Mexico, and Venezuela, all inhabited by people equally unfit for self-government, and geographically much closer to ourselves. We propose to guarantee them against outside meddling, and, above all, — from "tutelage," and make them, by walking, learn to walk alone.

This, I submit, is not only an answer to the question so frequently put to us, but a positive policy following established precedents, and, what is more, purely American, as distinguished from a European or British, policy and precedents.

I remain, etc.,

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

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